

Annual Review 2023/24



Ymddiriedolaeth Natur
Maldwyn
Montgomeryshire
Wildlife Trust

Chair's Overview

A large proportion of MWT's work is project-funded, with a time-restricted budget. Continuity requires further grant applications and is therefore shrouded in uncertainty. While award-winning ecotherapy programme Wild Skills Wild Spaces (WSWS) secured funding to continue "the enhancement of people's wellbeing through improved social confidence and opportunities to interact...within nature" [Cardiff Metropolitan University's Centre for Health, Activity and Wellbeing Research (CAWR) project evaluation], not all projects are as fortunate.

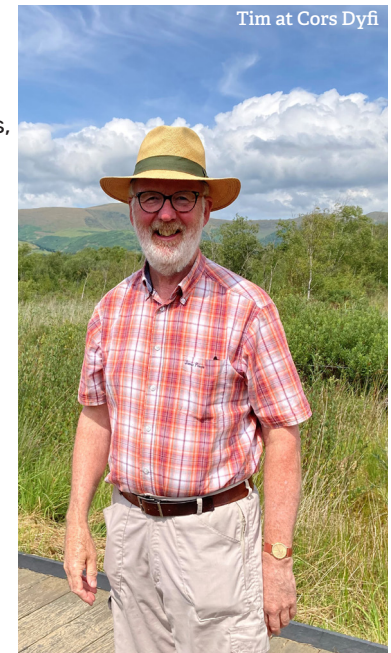
It's exciting to join with other landowners to extend the Trust's aims further across the county, giving wildlife increased connectivity. Our partnership with Welshpool Golf Club on the Welshpool Fairway to Haven project demonstrates that all sorts of activities can co-exist with nature given the chance. The golf course is already a haven for wildlife, but we'll be working with them to make it even better, particularly for the rare Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterfly. Also in Welshpool, building a wildlife garden at one of Barcud's housing developments has given access to nature close to home for their residents.

Dyfi Wildlife Centre has had another good year. Two osprey chicks hatched, fledged and migrated. During winter the kitchen was significantly extended, providing much better working conditions and increasing capacity. Meanwhile, a hide on the beaver enclosure has allowed a few lucky groups the opportunity to view our beaver family.

We've received a few generous legacies this year. We think hard about how to use these funds, which are invaluable in enabling otherwise out-of-reach activities, such as employing much-needed core staff, building and maintaining infrastructure, and saving for unforeseen circumstances and future land acquisitions.

Despite uncertainty over funding, MWT has grown continuously, delivering more projects, employing more staff and involving more of the public. We are very grateful to supporters, volunteers, staff and funders, allowing us to achieve our strategic aims of restoring 30% of land (and sea) for nature, getting 25% of the public involved with nature, and developing nature-based solutions to issues such as climate change and mental health problems.

Tim McVey, MWT Chair



Who We Are

Since 1982, Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust (MWT) has been the leading voluntary organisation promoting wildlife conservation, managing and caring for 18 nature reserves within the county, totalling some 510 hectares in area.

Our Vision:

An environment rich in wildlife for everyone

Our Mission:

To rebuild biodiversity and engage people with their environment

Our Objectives:

- 1) To stand up for wildlife and the environment
- 2) To create and enhance wildlife havens
- 3) To inspire people about the natural world
- 4) To foster sustainable living

Membership and Volunteers

The Trust received 205 new memberships during 2023/24, with the total number of member households at 1,209 and the number of individual members at 2,252. This represented very good growth, not least in light of the fact our membership rates were increased in September 2023 for the first time in six years. We were delighted that this rate increase did not result in many cancellations by existing members, either. We would like to thank all our members for supporting us and encourage as many of them as possible to sign up to Gift Aid (applicable to tax payers) as this generates an extra 25p per pound for us at no extra cost to them.

Interest in volunteering surged during 2023/24, bringing numbers more in line with pre-Covid times. This increased support was welcome indeed, with plenty of habitat management and wildlife surveying requiring the attention of our Living Landscapes team. Three regular volunteers helped in our now well-established Welshpool shop, meanwhile, which remained open for reduced hours at least two days a week. Volunteering continued to play a significant role in the Wild Skills Wild Spaces project, as well as at Cors Dyfi. Nor can we forget the invaluable input of all our Trustees with their myriad skills and knowledge. To recognise the contribution made by all our volunteers, we organised a thank you event at Dyfi Wildlife Centre, with food, drink and a fascinating talk about the reserve's beaver family.

In total, during the 2023/24 period, our volunteers have donated 1,564 days of their time, with a monetary value to the Trust of £112,608. Of course, the value of their contributions can't be measured in financial currency alone – we could not do everything we do without them. Thank you!

People and Wildlife

Wild Skills Wild Spaces Part 2



With funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, Wild Skills Wild Spaces Part 2 launched 1st July 2023. Maintaining its partnerships with Powys Teaching Health Board and Cardiff Metropolitan University, WSW Part 2 builds on the success of its award-winning forerunner, but now extend to improving the mental wellbeing of people aged 11 plus, while recruiting 40 volunteers. During 2023/24, the WSW team delivered 795 hours of ecotherapy to more than 120 individuals. Additionally, more than 160 hours' worth of events and workshops, from family

nature outings to clean-ups, reached 110 members of the community, significantly strengthening our presence and impact. Stand-out achievements have included re-gaining the Green Flag Community Award for Severn Farm Pond, recruiting 24 volunteers aged 11-74, building on our Friends of Cultivate and Friends of Severn Farm Pond volunteer groups and launching a social enterprise.

Gungrog Community Wildlife Garden

Thanks to a partnership with Barcud housing association, we transformed land at Welshpool's Clos Gungrog estate



into a community wildlife garden where residents can connect with nature. While the groundwork was completed the previous year, during 2023/24 this green space was enhanced. Raised beds packed with plants for pollinators, a herb garden, a young orchard, a pond and a picnic area overlooking the Montgomery Canal were designed to provide a mosaic of wildlife habitats. Complementing this is bilingual interpretation about the site and how visitors can recreate its wildlife-friendly features at home.

Adopt an Animal schemes

In December 2023, we launched Adopt an Osprey and Adopt a Dormouse schemes as another way for wildlife lovers to support us, while contributing to unrestricted income. The packs include prints of artworks of the species created especially and donated to MWT by local artists. Proceeds raise funds that will go towards conserving and protecting these animals – key species in our Strategy for 2030 – and many others in this special, wild corner of Mid Wales.

Legacy Campaign

Over the years MWT has received occasional gifts in Wills, some transformational. Legacy income has been identified as a growing revenue stream for charities such as ours, and developing this will help the Trust achieve its Strategic aim of having 20% of its budgeted income from unrestricted funding. During 2023/24, MWT began work on a new Legacy Campaign, producing a new bilingual leaflet, a Legacy Charter and other materials. MWT has also partnered with Octopus Legacy (formerly Guardian Angel) to offer supporters a free Will writing service.

Stand for Nature Wales

Through National Lottery Community Fund, young people aged 9 to 24 have participated in conservation, community engagement and environmental advocacy since Stand for Nature Wales (SFNW) launched in April 2021. In 2023/2024, the focus has been on project legacy through community work, laying foundations for nature-based solutions to climate change locally. In



the final full project year, 48 sessions were delivered to youth groups in Welshpool, Llanidloes and Machynlleth. Furthermore, all groups attended the Youth Summit at Llangrannog; the annual Summer Camp in collaboration with RWT; and visited Cardiff's Senedd, to promote the Pesticide-free Pledge.

Carbon Accounting

Despite not securing funding for 2023/24 we nevertheless upheld our pledge to calculate our annual carbon footprint, in order to inform carbon reduction actions to be carbon neutral by 2030. The link between the two inextricably linked crises of climate and nature was also the theme of our autumn 2023 all-staff meeting at Dyfi Wildlife Centre.

Community Outreach

While the majority of MWT's outreach is delivered through projects, in 2023/24 there were numerous additional public events. In autumn 2023, we marked the 35th and 30th anniversaries of Severn Farm Pond and Llyn Coed y Dinas. MWT Bird Group flourished, with talks on 'Magical Merlins' to 'How Birds are Affected by Climate Change'. We inspired people to 'Reconnect with Nature' and highlighted the importance of wind farms being in the right places to minimise wildlife impact with local talks. Funding from People's Postcode Lottery enabled us to raise the profile of Swifts. A further 10 nature-themed events on family fun, fungi, birds, bats and the importance of wildlife recording were delivered.



Cors Dyfi

Dyfi Osprey Project

Happily, current osprey pair, Telyn and Idris, returned to Cors Dyfi for their fourth year breeding together. This was also the 13th consecutive year of osprey breeding at Dyfi Osprey Project (DOP). While three eggs were laid, one failed to hatch. Fortunately, both Cennen (female) and Seiont (male) – both named after Welsh rivers, according to DOP tradition – survived to migration age, setting off for West Africa at the end of August 2023, the last time we saw the ospreys together as a family group. Additionally, we introduced a split-screen feature on the live streaming, so that we could watch more than one camera angle simultaneously. This was



particularly advantageous when the fledglings started perching away from the nest in July and August. At least four Cors Dyfi-born ospreys are now known to be successfully breeding at other sites, most in Wales and one in Cumbria, showing the impact our osprey project is having throughout the UK.

Conservation

Our ongoing conservation work this year included setting around two acres of foresting area to the south of the Observatory back to ecological 'stage zero' with a scrape (or lagoon), paid for by Nature Networks Fund. This will significantly increase biodiversity, and keep the bog wonderful and wet, maintaining the wetland habitat in the coming years. More invasive species were removed from the reserve, whilst a baseline biodiversity study on the beaver enclosure was ongoing. We are expecting to see a rise in biodiversity within the enclosure due to the presence of the beavers and their natural behaviours, reflecting other sites across Europe that have seen similar gains as a result of beaver introductions.



Byatt, one of our beaver family

While Cors Dyfi has become synonymous with ospreys, the reserve is incredibly important habitat for a whole host of other birds. This year a pair of Barn Owls bred in the Tŷ Maenan owl box (near the river) for the first time. We ringed one chick, which will enable us to find out more about these incredible birds. What's more, Nightingales were also recorded on the reserve. While this was not the first record on the reserve, these warblers are increasingly rare in Wales.



Cors Dyfi's new scrape

Dyfi Wildlife Centre

With partnership funding from North Wales Wildlife Trust (NWWT) we set up a beaver-watching hide in the beaver enclosure. Several public events were arranged for evening watching which went swimmingly. So much so, we are now exploring avenues to make watching beavers (without disturbing these shy semi-aquatic animals) a more accessible, inclusive activity, in a first for Wales.

Out on the reserve, the Nature Networks Fund enabled us to carry out general boardwalk repairs, including the re-engineering of the decking on both sides of the centre. This same grant funded some engaging interpretation about dragonfly life-cycles on the newly-finished boardwalk loop, now made from 100 percent recycled materials.

Thanks in part to the Community Facilities Programme, in spring 2024 our kitchen and shop extension was finished; this expansion doubled the area of the shop and almost tripled the kitchen/storage areas, improving working conditions and capacity,



New interpretation on the boardwalk loop

therefore increasing revenue potential from sales made in the shop and caff. Meanwhile, the Observatory had a much-needed facelift for its 10th year, with more interpretation and interactive features, along with structural improvements to the staircase and tower. This was funded by the Peter Murdoch Legacy, a gift bequeathed to MWT by longstanding volunteer Posh Pete.

Volunteers

As ever, our valued volunteers, whether veterans or newcomers, were vital in the running of Cors Dyfi. During 2023/24, they helped us with everything from people engagement to online engagement, talks to work in Caffi Ty Maenan, habitat management to general reserve maintenance. They also helped with the renovation of the Observatory. In total, these generous, hardworking souls donated more than 5,000 hours of their time in this period!



Our volunteers helped with the Observatory renovation

Photos: © MWT/Emyr Evans

Living Landscapes

Nature Reserves

MWT manages 18 nature reserves, all havens for wildlife and inspiring places for people to visit. They include limestone grassland, ancient woodland,



upland lakes, peat bogs, and wildflower meadows. Each is carefully maintained by MWT staff and a team of dedicated work party volunteers. In 2023/24 our Reserves Officer ran two work parties most weeks. A total of 243 volunteer days donated across 59 sessions, with activities including fencing, scrub clearance, coppicing, hay meadow management and infrastructure maintenance. Our Conservation Officers reported our best dormouse survey season since starting regular nest box

monitoring in 2012. The total number of dormice encountered was 75, an 83% increase on the previous high of 41 in 2014! This was particularly welcome after years of decline. It was also the best year ever for bats, with plenty found from four species. Noctule were found on four MWT nature reserves, all of which had no previous roost records for the species. Conversely, we had the lowest count of *Colchicum autumnale* (Autumn Crocus) blooms in ten years (331). Numbers of flowers do fluctuate widely each year; the last high was 2,090 in 2020. Thanks to People's Postcode Lottery (PPL) funding, our Pioneer Fund project carried out habitat surveys to monitor their condition at several of our reserves, as well as reptile surveys at Cors Dyfi.

Pathways for Pearls

After low numbers of our rare Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterfly in 2022, funding from PPL and Hafren Dyfrdwy was a lifeline, enabling us to continue vital surveying across six sites, habitat management in the project area and public engagement. The 2023 PBF



flight season saw very mixed success, with a split between the early and late sites – the early sites nearly all had good numbers, whilst the late sites were very poor. The reasons are unclear, but likely to be local weather conditions, with spring drought affecting nectar sources for the late sites. To raise awareness of these beautiful butterflies and the importance of the Welshpool area for them, we also engaged with local stakeholders at events at Welshpool Golf Club, Powis Castle and Derwen Garden Centre.

Welshpool Fairway to Haven

Launched in January 2024, this exciting new partnership with Welshpool Golf



Photo: © Hannah Zervas

Welshpool Golf Club is the focus of the Welshpool Fairway to Haven project

Club aims to manage and enhance the golf course for nature, whilst also improving access for local people. During 2023/24 period, specialist machinery was procured, the Friends of PBFs volunteer group was set up and some habitat management work was undertaken. The project is funded by Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature Challenge Fund, administered by WCVA.

Conservation work across Montgomeryshire

We continued as Secretariat for Powys Local Wildlife Site partnership, as well as surveying potential new sites and proposing them to the partnership. As a

member of Montgomeryshire Crayfish Working Group, our delivery included gathering water samples for analysis for eDNA. We also carried out site walkover surveys for NRW flood defence, supported Montgomeryshire Habitats Management Group and gave three talks to external groups.



We carried out habitat surveys at many of our reserves, thanks to PPL funding

Pumlumon Project

Established in 2007, the Pumlumon Project has taken a fresh look at how Welsh upland landscapes could be brought back to life, delivering



Photo: © Peter Cairns/2020VISION

The Pumlumon Project has been running for over 15 years

benefits for nature and people. Funding from British Airways Carbon Fund, administered by Pure Leapfrog – made up from voluntary passenger contributions (it is not an offsetting fund) – has enabled us to work with nine more farms, carrying out carbon and habitat audits and funding small-scale management actions that have positive ecological and farm business outcomes. We also established a national multi-stakeholder group in partnership with the Ecosystem Knowledge Network, which will form the beginning of a collaborative platform in Wales.

Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust

Financial Statements

For the year end 31st March 2024

The summarised accounts herewith are an extract from the Charity's statutory annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024. Mitchell Charlesworth reported on the accounts as independent auditors.

The annual report and accounts were approved by the Trustees on 23rd July 2024.

These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to gain a complete understanding of the financial affairs of the Charity. Copies of the full statutory annual report and accounts may be obtained from the Charity's registered office: Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, Park Lane House, High Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7JP.

Trustees who served during the year and subsequently:

Tim McVey
Chair

Clare Boyes
Vice Chair

Ann Bitcon
Treasurer

Peter Powell (*resigned*
November 2023)

Jill Robinson

Tim Ward

Sarah Evans

Sian Dorward

Susan Morley

Nick Burton (*co-opted*
August 2023)

Jane Storkey (*co-opted*
November 2023)

Nicola Berry (*co-opted*
March 2024)

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Chris Townsend
President (*resigned*
November 2023)

Chris Hurrell
President (*March 2024*
onwards)

Thank You

We would like to thank the following organisations for their financial support during the year:

Barcud
Climate Action Fund
ENRaW
Hafren Dyfrdwy
National Lottery Heritage Fund
Nature Networks Fund
Open Newtown
People's Postcode Lottery
Powys County Council
Pure Leapfrog
Renantis Ltd
Ricardo Energy
RSWT
Vine House Farm
Wilder Marches
Welsh Government
Welshpool Golf Club
Welshpool Town Council

Furthermore, we would like to thank all the individuals and groups who made donations to Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, whether financially or through volunteering.

MONTGOMERYSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Restricted funds (MWT only) 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Income from				
Donations and legacies	94,162	158,589	252,751	475,185
Charitable activities	663,079	-	663,079	948,421
Trading activities	-	279,811	279,811	238,889
Total income	<u>757,241</u>	<u>438,400</u>	<u>1,195,641</u>	<u>1,662,495</u>
Expenditure				
Charitable activities	525,456	470,327	995,783	901,714
Trading activities	-	171,106	171,106	152,872
Total expenditure	<u>525,456</u>	<u>641,433</u>	<u>1,166,889</u>	<u>1,054,586</u>
	231,785	(203,033)	28,752	607,909
Gain/(Loss) on revaluation of investment	-	-	-	-
Net income/(expenditure)	<u>231,785</u>	<u>(203,033)</u>	<u>28,752</u>	<u>607,909</u>
Transfers between funds	(186,134)	186,134	-	-
Net movement in funds	<u>45,651</u>	<u>(16,899)</u>	<u>28,752</u>	<u>607,909</u>
Reconciliation of funds				
<i>Funds at 1 April 2023</i>	2,767,304	734,140	3,501,444	2,893,535
Funds at 31 March 2024	<u>2,812,955</u>	<u>717,241</u>	<u>3,530,196</u>	<u>3,501,444</u>

This document is an extract from the full accounts of Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust & MWT Trading Limited.

MONTGOMERYSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	2024		2023	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets		2,937,116		2,886,726
Investments		37,822		37,822
		<u>2,974,938</u>		<u>2,924,548</u>
Current assets				
Stocks		43,070		39,703
Debtors		22,918		154,181
Cash at bank and in hand		548,980		453,608
		<u>614,968</u>		<u>647,492</u>
Creditors: falling due within one year		59,710		70,596
Net current assets		<u>555,258</u>		<u>576,896</u>
Net assets		<u>3,530,196</u>		<u>3,501,444</u>
Charity funds				
Restricted funds – MWT only		2,812,955		2,767,304
Unrestricted funds		717,241		734,140
Total funds		<u>3,530,196</u>		<u>3,501,444</u>

This document is an extract from the full accounts of Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust & MWT Trading Limited.



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Charity number: 512390 | Company number: 1612249

www.montwt.co.uk

Cover photo: Common Lizard at Cors Dyfi © MWT/Emyr Evans